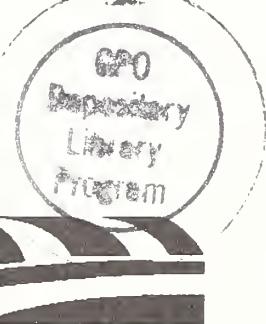


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Farm Broadcasters Letter

United States Department of Agriculture

Office of Communications

Washington, DC 20250-1340

Letter No. 2665

June 3, 1994

USDA SURVEY -- The annual survey on crops, stocks, and livestock inventories is now being conducted. About 125,000 farmers and ranchers will provide information needed to make State, regional and national estimates of crop acreage, grain in storage, and cattle and hog inventories. Local interviewers trained by USDA's National Agricultural Statistics Service are conducting the survey through personal or telephone interviews. The survey is particularly important this year because it will provide the first clear indications on crop supplies and livestock marketings following last year's floods in the Midwest and drought in the Southeast. Contact: Priscilla Glynn (202) 690-2146.

SERVICE FEES -- USDA is proposing to increase service fees for certain voluntary inspection, grading and certification of processed fruits and vegetables. The proposal raises the basic hourly rate from \$37 to \$39.50. For users with term contracts the charges would be \$22 per hour for in-plant sampling, up \$2. In-plant yearly full-time rate would be \$34 per hour, up \$2. In-plant services of less than a year duration would be raised to \$39.50, an increase of \$2.50 per hour. A major factor contributing to the changes are congressionally mandated salary increases for the Federal inspectors. The fees are to cover the cost of rendering services. Contact: Gil High (202) 720-8998.

IMPORTED PORK ASSESSMENTS -- USDA is proposing to increase assessments on imported pork and pork products. The assessments are established by formula each year, based on U.S. market prices for hogs, and fund research and promotional activities designed to strengthen the position of pork in the marketplace. The proposed increase is two-hundredths of a cent per pound, and reflects a seven percent increase in hog prices paid at major U.S. markets last year. The rate of assessment, 0.35 of one percent of market price, remains unchanged. Contact: Becky Unkenholz (202) 720-8998.

REDUCING TUBERCULOSIS -- In an effort to reduce importation of tuberculosis-infected cattle, USDA has placed a ban on importing from Mexico all Holstein steers and spayed heifers. There has been a higher incidence of tuberculosis in the Holstein breed from Mexico compared to other imported cattle. More than half of all cattle found to be infected with tuberculosis at U.S. slaughter plants were originally imported from Mexico. The level of TB infection of Holsteins at Mexican dairies is higher than 20 percent according to reports from Mexican cattle associations. Humans can contract bovine tuberculosis through consumption of unpasteurized milk from infected animals. Contact: Kendra Pratt (301) 436-4898.

REDUCING PAPERWORK -- USDA is reducing the paperwork burden for a cottonseed sampler's license. The revision eliminates the bonding requirement and application fees, and extends the period of new and renewed licenses from one to five years. The changes become effective July 1. The procedures for cottonseed sampler's license are now consistent with those for cotton samplers. Contact: Alicia Ford (202) 720-8998.

FOOD STAMP PLASTIC CARD -- Agriculture Secretary Mike Espy has called for all states to develop plans for implementation in 1996 of the Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) system. A one-year study of the statewide system in Maryland which provides food stamps and other benefits shows that the EBT system is saving money compared to the coupon distribution method, and is winning praise from program participants. Maryland began using the plastic card system on a pilot basis in 1989. More than 30 states have initiated EBT projects or are in various stages of planning for the system. **Contact: Neal Flieger (703) 305-2039.**

REFLECTING CHANGES IN AGRICULTURE -- Agriculture is no longer the dominant industry in many rural areas. To meet the changing times the Farm Credit System is seeking to expand its lending authority into financing rural nonfarm enterprises. Currently the Farm Credit System lends to agricultural producers and cooperatives, farm-related businesses, buyers of moderate-priced homes in rural communities, export customers, and certain rural utilities. Expansion of lending opportunities could dilute farmer's control over the System and its focus on production agriculture. An alternative would be removal by Congress of barriers to competition in agricultural credit markets. The System was created in 1916 to correct deficiencies in agricultural credit markets. **Contact: Audrae Erickson (202) 219-0719.**

CENSUS OF AG -- Initial published statistics from the 1992 Census of Agriculture indicate that farm numbers and farm size are in line with long-term trends. Each of 10 states that completed reports had fewer farms in 1992 than in 1987 when the previous census was taken. All 10 states had less farmland, and average farm size increased except in Oregon. The ten states are Delaware, Indiana, Iowa, Maryland, Missouri, Ohio, Oregon, Virginia, Washington, and Wisconsin. The trend toward fewer larger farms is likely to continue into the next century but at a slower rate than in previous years. **Contact: Dan Ledbury (202) 720-1790.**

BIOTECHNOLOGY -- Agricultural biotechnology offers important advantages to producers and consumers. It can increase crop production, lower farming costs, improve food quality and safety, and enhance environmental quality. Why wouldn't everyone favor that? There are public concerns that negative effects might outweigh potential benefits. USDA has produced a report, "Agricultural Biotechnology, An Economic Perspective," that describes how social, economic, and policy factors will influence the development, consumer acceptance, and producer adoption of agricultural biotechnology. Cost is \$9.00. To order a copy dial 1-800-999-6779. **Contact: Margriet Caswell (202) 219-0434.**

ECONOMIC STATUS OF RETIRED PEOPLE -- Latest research by USDA shows that elderly households, age 65 or over, had a median income of \$24,805 in 1991. Social Security provided 30 percent of the total in multiperson families, and 44 percent for elderly living alone. Only 40 percent of the elderly living alone received pension benefits. The majority of the elderly own their home without a mortgage. During the 1980's there was a 16 percent increase in the population age 65-74, and 31 percent increase in the number of people age 75 and older. With Americans living longer and retiring younger, policymakers, financial planners, and educators need to consider the expanded retirement period in planning for individuals and creating national policy. **Contact Nancy Schwenk (301) 436-8461.**

FROM OUR RADIO SERVICE

AGRICULTURE USA #1930 -- The very first consumer food product created by genetic engineering is finally on the market. It's a new tomato that is causing a lot of controversy. Gary Crawford talks with researchers, marketers and government officials about this new development. (Weekly reel -- 13-1/2 minute documentary.)

CONSUMER TIME #1411 -- A new tomato; vitamins and milk; grilling turkey; plastic benefits; biodegradable news inks. (Weekly reel of 2-1/2 to 3 minute consumer features.)

AGRITAPE FEATURES #1922 -- Wheat acreage reduction set at zero; a new tomato hits the horticultural scene; midwest flood repair report; what Most Favored Trade states for China means for U.S. farmers; a challenging weather outlook for crops. (Weekly reel of features.)

USDA RADIO NEWSLINE -- **Special Note** Thursday, June 9, USDA releases its new crop production and supply/demand reports at 8:30 a.m. EDT. We will have stories from the reports on the line at 10:30 a.m. EDT. We will also add new stories at 5:00 p.m. EDT. Friday, June 10, cotton update, world oilseed situation, world grain/crop production; Monday, June 13, feed update; Tuesday, June 14, tobacco outlook, crop & weather update, and possible coverage of Congressional hearings on the Administration's pesticide reform package; Wednesday, June 15, milk production, update on industrial uses of ag products, outlook for western hemisphere ag; Thursday, June 16, sugar outlook; Friday, June 17, cattle on feed, ag outlook summary. These are the USDA reports we know about in advance. Our Newsline carries many stories every day which are not listed in this lineup. Please don't let the lack of a story listing keep you from calling.

USDA RADIO NEWSLINE (202) 488-8358 or 8359
COMREX ENCODED (202) 720-2545
Material changed at 5 p.m., EDT, each working day.

FROM OUR TELEVISION SERVICE

FEATURES -- Patrick O'Leary reports on new cotton products developed by scientists with USDA's Agricultural Research Service, (1:54). Patrick O'Leary reports on USDA research to make the native shrub Guayule (why-oolie) a commercial source of domestic rubber, (1:57). Joe Courson, University of Georgia Cooperative Extension Service, reports on night testing of fluorescent pesticides to ensure proper spreading of chemicals in farm fields, (1:12). Joe Courson, U-GA, reports on a Georgia farmer's use of inter-cropping to let beneficial insects control damaging pests, (1:25)

ACTUALITIES -- Norton Strommen, USDA chief meteorologist, gives the June outlook for U.S. crop and weather conditions, (1:20). Strommen gives the 90-day outlook, which calls for a duplication of conditions experienced in the summer of 1992, (1:30). Strommen says there is no El Nino or other unusual weather maker in the cards for 1994, (1:13).

On satellite Galaxy 7, transponder 9, channel 9, audio 6.2 or 6.8, downlink frequency 3880 MHz.: Thursdays from 3:45 - 4:00 p.m., ET; Mondays 11:00 - 11:15 a.m., ET.

OFFMIKE

IT'S SO DIFFERENT FROM LAST YEAR...says Dennis Morrice (KICD, Spencer, IA). In 1993 farmers had no crop and flooded fields. This year planting was two weeks early, crops have emerged, and it's dry. Al Grigg has joined the farm department after 28 years in the farm equipment business. He says hot sellers are conservation tillage implements and planters, either new or used. Manufacturers are building for retail sales, not inventory. Spring optimism and increased sales have producers, dealers and manufacturers smiling.

THE AUCTION BUSINESS...is doing well, says Cliff Mitchell, (KASM, Albany, MN). Sales of good used machinery have increased. Producers are bringing in the first hay crop. There has been little winter kill. Protein is about 24%. Soil temperatures are increasing and if some rain visits the area the corn crop will have a good start.

NAFB...1994 membership directory is scheduled to be delivered in June.

Farm Broadcasters Letter



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PRIVATE PROPERTY RIGHTS...issues were addressed by the Missouri and Kansas legislatures this year, says Mike Railsback (WDAF, Kansas City, MO). Missouri passed a bill requiring state agencies to determine if their regulations will constitute a taking of property rights. It is a compromise bill. The governor vetoed it last year, but is expected to sign it this time. Kansas did not pass a property rights bill this year. Mike says he's heard of a producer who is making money from last year's flood that covered fields with sand. The farmer is selling the sand to a construction company.

PASTURE...in the western part of the state is a little short, says Lee McCoy (Texas Agribusiness Network, Dallas), but rain is finally arriving. Lee says the network is moving from the John Carpenter Freeway in Dallas to new facilities in Arlington. They'll be situated over deep center field in the Arlington ballpark. Wow!

VIC POWELL
Office of Communications